/1052 cont./

If one carefully examines the words of the men mentioned, he can obtain from them a conception of the everlasting eminence of the Supreme Being, without temporal limits in either direction. Our Fuegians do not even discuss a cessation of the existence of this "Kétsi-up-there," and of all his characteristics they are most familiar with the one meant by the oft-repeated designation Watayinéwa. According to their conception, this "very ancient one" has simply always existed, and no one questions where he actually came from or what his origin is. One may also assume that, according to the belief of the Yamana, this "very ancient one" has always remained the same. Nowhere do they imply, much less state, that he has changed his personal attitude toward human beings or the laws imposed upon them. In sum, he has remained personally the same, hence unchanging. In the strict sense of the word, he does not in any case let himself be influenced by human beings. "We Yamana often complain bitterly, but he deals with us as he pleases!" Mary said. She had explained to me that in distress and in serious illness those who are directly or indirectly affected turn to the Supreme Being, praying for deliverance. He takes cognizance, so to speak, of these prayers and sometimes proves well-intentioned, but he would by no means feel pressed or forced to change his absolutely free decision. The Yamana are clearly convinced of this.

Despite the decided arbitrariness with which Watayinéwa now and then obviously interferes with the fate of individual human beings, he is generally regarded as benevolent and good. They like to address him as Hídjipan, for he is truly a father to each one and to the Yamana as a whole. This designation most often occurs in the old traditional prayer formulas. With the happy conviction that he is concerned about everyone, and especially that he will provide each one with the animals necessary for his subsistence, the Yamana trust him and his providence. Many approach him with the naïve, childlike confidence with which, in /1053/ human relationships, a child confronts its good father. Although grievous blows sometimes make the individual lose his mental balance, in general "the conviction of the benevolence of the Supreme Being" (Gusinde [2]:163) predominates. Hence they also venture to address him with the intimate Kalaíjten, "dear little father" and the friendly Táuwa, "the dear, good old man."

/1056 cont./

TU 776 626 when protects this or that person from lapses, but it is really because of the ancient tradition itself that they adhere to its demands. No one would ever complain of the tight bonds imposed on free action. On the contrary, the customs of the old people are everywhere highly respected, because ultimately Watauinéiwa appears as the guardian of public order.

781 776 195 Inasmuch as he must be approached with piety, no one dares repeat his name without a special reason, much less hold it in contempt. If the Supreme Being is mentioned, the Yamana shows decided piety and a certain solemnity in his whole outward bearing when he speaks his name, thus giving the spoken word a marked note of consecration. The various names applied to the deity are never thoughtlessly uttered. Another sign of pious respect is the use of circumlocutions. These are used most often when in the course of a ceremony of mourning an excited person struggles with Manunkin, "the sole mighty one." It is as though he wanted to dampen his improper conduct, as though he would not turn immediately and directly to the familiar deity. The habitual respectful attitude of the Yamana toward the person of the Supreme Being himself forces them, so to speak, to the greatest possible fidelity to tribal custom, particularly the moral obligations, and does not let the thought of contradiction or renunciation arise.

β. Prayers of Supplication

• 782 [171] The Yamana and the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 509) are exactly alike concerning the form and distinctive character of their religious veneration, but they are /1056/ conspicuously different in the use of prayers and invocations to their deity. Whereas the Selk'nam dedicate to their Temáukel a few more or less freely chosen words only on rare occasions (Vol. I, 510), our Fuegians have at their disposal a long list of established prayer formulas which everyone uses according to the given circumstances. They have adhered to them so strictly that they still repeat them even today, although individual words and expressions are no longer used in daily life and have even become incomprehensible; only the general sense of the whole formula has been preserved.

/1056 cont./

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It is understandable that laments and formulas of mourning are most numerous, inasmuch as every death agitates our Indians to an extraordinary degree and stirs him to the depths. By comparison, the prayers of supplication are plain and simple. The latter will be given first, with brief explanations of the meaning, and afterwards the other prayers and related invocations. I may properly omit a grammatical analysis because we have Bridges' dictionary and because Hestermann has undertaken special investigations on the grammar of the Yamana, to which we refer.

(1) Hitapán hā́ja kémétawék.
My father, to me be merciful.

These words are a general supplication which the Supreme Being is asked to fulfill, for example, to grant success in the hunt or good weather during the canoe trip. -- PD:321 gives mótawɨgɨ, "to act kindly, to do good, show pity or mercy" /cited in English/.

(2) Hitapán, ánnu hā́ja kémétawā́guan
My father, now then, to me be kind

hā́uančimā́lan.
today.

Obviously this request is similar to the preceding one. It is uttered immediately before a trip, a hunt, and similar occasions.

(3) Hā́janenikā́ja kémétawā́guan hā́uančimā́lan,
To us be merciful today,

Hitapán.
my father.

This request is again like the others. It is sent heavenward in the early forenoon shortly before they set out on a major undertaking or a long canoe trip.

/1056 cont./

(4) Annu sikája, kémétawáguan, Hitapéan.
Now then, thou, be merciful [to me], my father.

This petition seems to be a general one, but it is used especially by a mother whose child is ill, so that Watayinéiwa will not let it die, but make it well again.

(5) Hitapéan, ujéjna hája wetutéki.
My father, let me go, I am making it known to you.

A person who petitions in this way is really asking for good weather. Hence he announces to the Supreme Being that he will soon start on his trip. /1057/ -- BD:66 gives ülaina, "to let walk about, to let wander" /cited in English/, and BD:560 adds tíneki, "to show, cause to see" /cited in English/. -- The Yamana also often address the Supreme Being in spontaneous utterances. If a family has planned a long trip, the father will get up early from his bed, move to the hut entrance, and look appraisingly at the clouds or the direction of the wind. If good weather is in the offing, he says to the-one-up-there: "I thank thee, Hidífuan, that thou hast sent us favorable weather!" If the prospects are not so favorable, he fervently requests: "Hidífuan, thou knowest that we wish to travel on, be kind to us and send us good weather!"

(6) Annu, hipikája kémétawéx maalíaian,
Now then, to us all be kind every day,

Hitapéan.
my father.

[513] Before a family lies down to sleep in the hut, one of the older members repeats this saying. It sounds like a short evening prayer containing gratitude for the present day and a request for success on the following day. According to the people who explained it, the emphasis is on the request that Watayinéiwa let all the members of the family be well and happy during the coming day.

/1007 cont./

(7) Anun. bipiłáje mětawágata. Hitapáge.
Now then, us receive mercifully, my father,

dźagwaja.
alas.

With this request a person turns back to Hidášwan after he was punished by the deity through a death, he had quarreled with him, so to speak. -- BD:321 gives mětawágata, "to take a person under one's care, to be kind and merciful to a person" /cited in English/.

(8) Hojanpihája bílakumupáge. Hitapáge.
Us he will [surely] push forward, my father.

A person who is rowing on the water and is aiming for a shore or an island where there is game repeats this request, confident that Hidášwan will let the canoe glide there quickly as though he personally were pushing it with a strong hand. -- BD:177 mentions bílamúdi, "to shove, push, press, bear against with the hands" /cited in English/.

(9) Uxája mětuímíšu. Watagimíjwa.
To me give a good course, the old one above.

A person makes this entreaty during the canoe trip if bad weather threatens, so that he will reach his goal or the nearest safe shore.

(10) Upáje kémětawágu. Hitapáge. ídkamáču ínen.
To me be merciful, my father, save the boat.

In bad weather they ask that the good father-up-there lift the canoe over all dangers. -- BD:401 explains ídkamáči, "to uphold in one's arms, to raise or lift up" /cited in English/. /1058/

(11) Hitapáge, bíje aščúla kémětawagína.
My father, to me with ašúla be merciful,

čiéxage.
čiéxage.

/1958 cont./

This means: Send me help through an ohkjin ohe grampus, Pseudorca crassidens/ against the lakéima /worst spirit/ that came near my canoe and threatened me. The word kúrrop serves to strengthen the request and replaces the word Watayinéjwa. Although direct address is avoided, the old-one-up-there knows that these words are addressed to him.

(12) khóin ohkjo ki-wéla ohjo ohkjin
The heart to you [protective] from above strong

ohkuma.
[m] sitting here.

This request means: May the-one-up-there help you who are sitting here so that you will freely develop your strength and be able to go on singing for a long time. Adelheid spoke these words during the youth initiation, as she looked at old Richard who had been exerting himself for some time as the leader of the singing. -- The word ohkin, "heart," also has a further meaning, as in German, and BD:263 acknowledges this: "the heart, the affections, the soul" /cited in English/. According to BD:14 ohkjo means "strong, firm, powerful" /cited in English/. The word ohku here, according to BD:366, means "to sit, to be sitting" /cited in English/.

Y. Prayers of Thanksgiving

The preceding prayers of supplication follow a recognizably uniform pattern. The prayers of thanksgiving for all kinds of gifts, which as such are multifarious and are bestowed by the Supreme Being, have more variety. It is actually amazing that our Fuegians often feel a special urge to give thanks for the benefits that Watayinéjwa bestows upon them. Such a practice points to the stable, close relationship that the Yamana believe they have with their deity. Because it is easy for them to express gratitude, this relationship must be favorable and satisfy them very much. It makes them feel truly happy.

/1958 cont./

(1) aïár[I] Hitapúan. aïár[I] Kalaiɛ́xĕn.
Thanks my father. Thanks, little old father.

With these short formulas the Yamana pays his debt of gratitude on various occasions. They are often used and are familiar to everyone. -- In MD-45 we find ŏŏs, "I am so glad! Well done!..." /Aimed in English/. This is undoubtedly the same as aïár[I].

(2) aïár[I], Hitapúan, karŭutux
Thanks, my father, favorable weather

xáĕ-
accompanied me.

Thanks is given in this manner by a person who has again reached a safe shore after a canoe trip; while he is comfortably resting, he thinks about his trip.

(3) aïár[I], hiyúla kĕmĕtauwĕ́xkete Hitapúan.
Thanks, to both of us was merciful my father.

/1958/ This sentence is likewise an expression of thanks for the favorable course or the successful outcome of some undertaking in which two persons were engaged.

(4) aïár[I], Hitapúan, hĕ́la kĕmĕtauwĕ́gude
Thanks, my father, to me was good

haxaĕ́tmĕ́ajan.
today.

A person who is luxuriating in the enjoyment of some success, especially one who is enjoying rich hunting spoils, does not forget afterwards to make known in this manner his grateful acknowledgment to the kind giver and benefactor.

(5) Hajeaanihĕ́ja kĕmaustuxmĕ́nax Hitapúan.
Us has protected my father.

/1059 cont./

With this formula one wants to express thanks for success, for some advantage which he achieved, or for particular protection granted him. One family greets another with this formula after they have returned home or when they meet on the water. -- BD:181 writes "kómasuteka, to go or come up in order to take care of; kómasuxmóni, to get up, or come up and stand guardian over" /cited in English/.

(6) Sáhagusa Wačinéjwa Hitapúančikaja.
Satisfied I with the old one, my father.

Filled with gratitude, a mother who was worried about her sick child and is now happy that it is well again expresses herself in these words. According to BD:182, sahagúta is "to be happily, or:at peace" /cited in English/.

(7) Annu, hája kégusat alagumutákilá-
Now then, me it pleased to look upon

Watauinéjwa-sáf, hapančimálan.
Watauineiwa in heaven, today.

One who was sick but has become well again gives thanks in this manner. Watauinéjwa had already "looked upon" him, that is, aimed at him with the intention of letting him die, but once more he desisted. -- BD:20 gives alagumútuf, "to gaze, look, watch sitting" /cited in English/.

(8) Annu hája kétumálala tupúan Hitapúan.
Now then, from me bad time took away my father.

A person who was sick for a long time but who has completely recovered rejoices in this fashion; the torture of disease is over, and he experiences a new summer, so to speak.

(9) Annu, hája kaktípa talagēnatupúan Hitapúan.
Now then, me from above looked upon my father.

/1059 cont./

TB 539 These are the words of a man who felt he was near death because Watayinéʃwa cast his eye upon him. Because this man recovered, /1060/ he joyfully gives thanks for having escaped the threatening misfortune. -- BD:382 gives talagÑnatapina, "to look friendly, gaze, be gazing intently" /cited in English/.

(10) Anma, hipí, mërnárna, aíár'; hipí
Now then, we new summer, thank; for us

tunakÑtumʃala tupʃan.
in winter past.

TB 539 825 As soon as the first signs of approaching spring appear, after the long months of winter with its abundant snow, everyone breathes more freely and joyfully expresses his feelings of renewed zest for life with these words. -- Compare tupʃana in BD:516.

(11) HíÑpan hiʃíki hatagʃíuí.
I myself saw sea anemones.

More precisely this means: I was the first to see with my own eyes the sea anemone. -- According to BD:280, hiÑpan is "I only, I by myself" /cited in English/; according to BD:270, hÑkÑÑiuí, "the red sea anemones" /cited in English/. The small scarlet sea anemones, also called sea roses (Actiniaria), can be found all the year round; nevertheless it is always an occasion for great rejoicing when, in waning winter, one discovers the unusually bright-colored colonies of these small animals. They are greeted as harbingers of spring which everyone hopes to live through. The Yamana thank Watayinéʃwa with the above prayer formula for this favorable prospect. In sheer exuberance the people dance and hop about, even in the fragile canoe, regardless of the great danger of treading a hole in it and smashing it. The person who first sees a bright-colored sea anemone behaves very boisterously.

TB 539 (12) Annáčíg. hipí mërnárna, aíár';
Now then, us new summer, thank;

annáčíg. hipí mërnárna.
now then, us new summer.

/1060 cont./

With this longer phrase the people thank the Supreme Being for providing them with a new summer and with it another new bit of life. -- BD:25 writes amilihi'a.

(13) Alai, hipi, sumiana.
Thanks, as we paint with egg yolk,

hlhuhlin.
summer is here.

In detail this phrase means: Thanks be to thee, Watapinihwa, that [through thy grace] we may experience this new summer, as an expression of our joy, we are painting ourselves with egg yolk. -- BD:282 writes hlhuhlin, "the other, another summer" /cited in English/. BD:493 gives dimisana, "to beautify or adorn oneself in any way" /cited in English/. -- With this exclamation they invite each other to make a special facial painting as soon as the first birds' eggs are available in spring. With the yolk of a fresh egg they smear /1061/ a line the width of a finger, which begins at the edge of the hair, goes across the forehead and the bridge of the nose, and down to the upper lip. While this is going on there is lively and sometimes boisterous merriment. Filled with gratitude, they do not always address Hiddhuan directly with this prayer formula, but it is done indirectly whenever they recite it.

(14) Anna, hipa, hlmaguzimaguipa yirum.
Now then, for me troubled himself for favorable weather

hipihipa hlmaguzimigua Watapinihwa.
for us troubled himself Watapinihwa.

With these words, too, they thank the Supreme Being for the favorable weather which he provided for the canoes. An individual is speaking for himself personally and for his companions. -- Compare hlaina in BD:66, as well as its use in Formula 5 (p. 983) and Formula 2 (p. 983).

/SIL cont./

(16) Amm, hipikíje ekwagetíwate ikwagége.
Now then, us has protected my father.

ekíinde tipé ragewagíwate ámen.
merciful us he rescued the bear.

tipé lehógutage ikwagége'ikíje.
we congratulate [ourselves] on our father.

These longer words of thanksgiving are repeated by those who have found safe refuge after a dangerous sea voyage. One should visualize the sudden change of weather which sometimes overtakes a canoe in the middle of a wide channel. -- BD:428 gives ragetíge. "to keep near to in order to support or aid by one's presence, ... to defend, aid by being present" /cited in English/. Compare also, in BD:181, lehegíkíge. "to congratulate oneself on a happy success" /cited in English/. -- The above words, therefore, express how glad the Tamets are to have a benevolent father-up-there who cares for them and rescues them; they are congratulating themselves on having him.

(16) Sémaktiw hígétila hínen hajenígte ?íkwag.
Free from hígétila we united in the ?íkwag.

makainteíla íthe tehíje hínen
with the strangers here with us we

lehogutíthe.
peacefully united.

Amm, hipikíje hekajagwanígte. ?íkwag. Amm,
Now then, us to help promised. ?íkwag. Certainly.

kémeswégíha kíndé, hajanaskíje íthi
well wishing both, to us [remains] place of land.

hínanéi tíkamítupe hajandépan.
where we spend the winter we alone,

wélapatux-ett kégurajminíana
[in case] murderer in heaven does not intend to take away

1. Gusinde—GSD 5-6 (1919-1924) 1927 ... Yahgan SHG

/[illegible] sem./

•7B SH

Hajananikŕja			Hajananikŕja
on.	Thanks,	the old one.	Us
watashiwakuta,	ahkŕ	wanaginŕwa	hŕŕu
heavier awaken,	thank [him]	Wanaginŕwa	all
hŕŕashigan	ahnaginŕkŕan		
these days	was peacefully removed,		
kaginŕnaginŕkŕan	kaginŕgan	ahnaginŕ	kŕŕa kŕŕkan
so also in future,	kaginŕgan	two	likewise furthermore
hŕŕnaginŕkŕa	kajanŕkŕa	kŕŕa,	kŕŕgŕgŕa Hidŕŕwan,
will protect	our	father,	thanks my father,
kŕŕgŕgŕa	Hidŕŕwan!		
thanks	my father!		

This long prayer was freely invented by Calderon at the conclusion of the youth initiation in March, 1922. An approximate translation would be: Without being molested by [illegible]a (14) we have

> 14. This Kina spirit is mentioned only occasionally during the initiation (p. 768).

celebrated the [illegible] here in peaceful communion with the two mangum [Gusinde and Koppers]. They promised to help us (15).

> 15. I had assured the families settled in Puerto Mejillones that I would intercede on their behalf with the Chilean government to have this area ceded to them exclusively as their property. Compare Gusinde (c):434.

Because they are people of good will, they will fullfill their promise. Then this area around Puerto Mejillones will belong to us alone and be our property, and we shall be able to spend each winter here undisturbed. If only that "murderer-in-heaven" will not seize us and take us away! Thanks be to Watashiŕwa who still gives us life. Watashiŕwa will continue to protect us and care

/1062 cont./

for us, as he has these days. Our father will also protect these two Whites. For this, thanks be to thee, my father!

Just a reference to a few words which are also given in BD. BD:154 gives xönnakĭta, "solitary, lonely, secluded" /cited in English/. BD:152 gives xabagĕcĭa, "to lie down happily, to lie down in peace, to be or live happily" /cited in English/. BD:281 explains laĭa, instead of lĕĭa given above, as, among other things: "shelving rocks with large spaces between them" /cited in English/, which is true of the coast at Puerto Mejillones. BD:177 mentions kögurĕĭĕa, "to be impatient to get" /cited in English/. BD:181 gives kömausteka, "to go, or come up in order to take care of" /cited in English/. The word kexĕgede is the same as kategata in BD:170.

It is surprising, to mention this again, that our Fuegians have created definite formulas of sincere thanksgiving for various occasions and that they often address these to their Supreme Being to pay their debt of gratitude to him.

δ. Laments

The formulas with which bereaved persons filled with grief pour out their hearts and with which /1063/ people also unburden their souls of other forms of sorrow are more numerous and varied. In such situations they show their very human and altogether sensitive natures which they never before revealed to a European as ~~openly as they never before revealed to a European as~~ openly as they did to me on the occasion of a large funeral ceremony or on a few other occasions. Besides the laments given here, the people of former times had a larger number which must be regarded as hopelessly lost. I was assured of this several times. The prayers follow here in a rather free order, beginning with those that are actual expressions of mourning.

(1) Hitapĕan, kĕmudĕkun hĕĭa ka-kĕpa
My father, why indeed me from above

tutumeyuwakĕte.
punished.

/1072 cont./

E. Various Other Expressions

•782 539 Finally there are a few more formulas with which the Yamana turn to their Supreme Being pleadingly or gratefully, as the situations of everyday life demand. All of them are brief and the meaning clear. Some of them are amusing, and it is surprising that our Fuegians, in child-like openheartedness, tell their Hái͡ŋan even the most ordinary things.

(1) Hitapáŋan hášа mötawögámeč, ásnu,
My father me protect, now then,

hášа mačáŋan.
I return.

When he bids farewell, the person leaving says: If my-father-up-there keeps his hand spread over me protectively, I shall come back to this place hale and hearty. -- BD:321 gives mötawögata, "to take a person under one's care" /cited in English/. BD:21 gives amaka, "place, position" /cited in English/. BD:311 has mačí, "to come home" /cited in English/.

(2) Tála hášа Hitapáŋan talagčnakúru,
Should me my father want to take away,

táneken hášа.
seek me.

With these words a person is thinking of the possibility that death might overtake him during his voyage. He takes leave and says to the others: If this apprehension should come true, you will have to look for me a long time and still you won't find me. /1073/

(3) Úla yčila hášn dčpan, Wataŋinčiwa
Yes farewell really, the old one

katalagčna kuruúna hipikčja.
take away wants from one another.

The meaning of this formula is exactly like the preceding one.

/1073 cont./

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539

It is used when a person sets out on a major journey and says farewell for a long time. It says: Our separation is truly forever if it pleases Watauinéiwa to take one of us away in death. -- BD: 262 gives hain tōpan, "now is the time, in real earnest" /cited in English/.

(4) Tūla Hitapūan hajakā́ja kēmētauwagumūtu,
In case my father to me merciful,

ánnu hipā́j čī́la matauughā́inan.
now then, us again unite.

This formula, too, contains the familiar idea: Should it please my father to preserve me from danger and death, we shall meet again, safe and sound, at the end of my long journey.

(5) Watauinéiwa hā́ja kumēkalēni.
The old one me westerly weather.

A person complains because Watauinéiwa surprised him on his voyage with westerly weather which is always unfavorable. -- BD:210 gives kūmōči, kumōka, "to go or come Westward" /cited in English/.

(6) Uxā́ja, lḗmata wā́jauina, Hitapūan, uiáina
Ah, confused go about, my father weather

kēmūtua sa-t-arugatā́ra Hitapūan? kēmūtua
why you burden my father? why eyes

samunkēmbā́nata, Hitapūan, ikamā́na.
closed, my father, with snow?

Angry old Peine suddenly spoke these words when she was obliged to wade through the snow in bare feet. Nelly had sent for her; it was on March 21, 1922. She meant the following: Hitapūan listen, I am so indignant that my head is swimming because I must stamp through the snow. Why do you annoy me with bad weather? Do you keep your eyes closed and not see how much snow there is here on the ground?

/1073 cont./

•782 539

(7) Hā́ia čílla akigamáni Tánuwa asúnan
Me again hit the old one in the woods

lēkēskḗta; kḗndam hitaualašinánude?
my head; how I bear it?

[753] /1074/ In wandering through the woods a man was in danger of being killed by a falling tree trunk; again he once was lightly struck. This gave him such a shock that he developed a headache. He mentions the old-one-up-there as the cause of it. That is why his situation is particularly serious and he does not know how he will retain his mental balance. -- Most of the words used here are repeated in the following exclamation.

(8) Tánuwa hája cílla akigamanita lēkēskḗta
The old one me again hit my head

asúnan kḗndam hitaualašinánude?
in the woods, how I bear it?

In content this saying does not differ from the preceding one and says the same thing, but it expresses more definitely and emphatically the intention of Wataui nḗiwa to let the man be killed. -- Compare the verb akigámata, "to hit unintentionally, or by mistake" /cited in English/, in BD:15. BD:183 translates köndám as: "such, so, in such a manner, in that way" /cited in English/. The word asúnan is evidently synonymous with ŏsunna, "forest, wood, jungle, thicket" /cited in English/, in BD:46.

(9) Wataui nḗiwa čikā́ia kēlakanā́a sa-kumā́su.
The old one you will take away [if] you lazy.

[867] This formula is one example of the precepts which are given the candidates in the youth initiation. It warns the uš wā́ala that the old-one-up-there does not tolerate a lazy person, but will let him die prematurely. -- The word kēlakanā́a is related to kölenkö́na, "to drive, shove, push away" /cited in English/, in BD:178, and to related forms.

782 197 Besides the formulas listed here the Yamana of former days used many others containing the same ideas, which now must be

/1074 cont./

182 197 regarded as lost. The few that were saved have unusual words and archaic sentence formations, showing their origin in the distant past. Even older persons were no longer able to give me an exact and detailed explanation of each formula, and they excused themselves by saying that such obsolete words and idioms were no longer used in everyday speech. It is therefore not surprising that old John Lawrence, as well as his sons who were versed in the language, was sometimes baffled by these sayings. The colloquial language of the present day is the result of considerable change since the time when the representatives of the individual dialect groups (p. 199 /untranslated/) were more crowded together and intermingled. Thus, although almost always only the basic idea of any given formula can be determined, all of them together furnish a sufficiently complete picture of the Supreme Being whose image our Yamana carry in their hearts and whose characteristics are familiar to them.

/1075/ c. Originality of the Yamana Religion

771 177 The above details taken from the religious heritage of the Yamana are not inconsiderable in number. All of them were brought to light only through my travels. These facts contradict the unanimous agreement of earlier travelers and of the missionaries, active for many years, who, so to speak, flatly deny that our Fuegians have any religious conception and religious activity. This sharp contradiction demands a reliable explanation, all the more so since the religious heritage of the Yamana not only proves rich, but also has a determining, guiding influence on the whole moral attitude of these Indians. It has been repeatedly pointed out, and must still be treated in detail, that all the moral obligations and the traditional customs are, after all, bound up with the Supreme Being.

By way of negative proof it can be convincingly shown that neither the navigators who lay at anchor for only hours or days in the Cape Horn region nor those Europeans who took individual Yamana to Europe with them offered actual religious instruction (16).

16. One may certainly assume that if Fitz-Roy,

/1082 cont./

775 human soul after death under the most disparate conditions imag-
797 inable, in sharp contrast to their own faith. I myself experienced
177 this. During a burial, while the corpse in the grave was being covered with earth, an old man, in the helplessness of his grief, turned to me with the following words which sounded very scornful: "There he lies, my cousin. And yet you Europeans say: 'Every corpse will leave its grave and become that which it was in life.' No, there is no such thing!" This man, like all his countrymen, was simply not to be converted to the new teachings of the missionaries; he clung to the traditions handed down by his forefathers. They always know how to make a sharp division between their own indigenous body of ideas and newly introduced, foreign conceptions or views.

776 Furthermore, a characteristic feature of the religious ideas of our Fuegians is their pronounced simplicity. The Supreme Being even lacks a proper name. Every Yamana is named after his /1083/ birthplace (p. 536). Is it not logical, therefore, that "the-one-up-there" has no such name because he was not born in the homeland of our Indians? Instead they use circumlocutions as ordinary social conventions. The names for the Supreme Being emphasize particular characteristics which are, however, intensified to the utmost. In both directions, therefore, tribal customs with regard to name-giving are transferred to him. If here below an aged person is shown general respect, all the more is this due the foremost and true "old one," Watauineiwa. Similarly, the few remaining characteristics applied to him are part of the everyday events and social customs of the Yamana people. The fact remains, however, that he is a spirit and therefore exhibits forms of being that differ from people here on earth. Nothing specific is known about these forms. Truly, the Fuegian is consistent in his simple thinking, even concerning his deity.

782 Finally the considerable number and the diversity of their
197 prayer formulas must be noted. The archaic wording speaks for
791 itself. The Indians themselves vouch for the great age of these short sayings because they contain many words and word combinations that have long since disappeared from ordinary speech. In addition there is the opinion of the aged John Lawrence and his sons who were well versed in the language and several times expressed

/1083 cont./

themselves along the same lines. John Lawrence, after he had examined those formulas for the first time, assured me emphatically: "I have been associated with the Yamana for all of 53 years and I never learned anything whatever about this!" He examined them carefully and said afterward: "Neither the names for the native deity nor the prayer formulas disclose any kind of borrowing from our Christian conceptions. Everything throughout has the stamp of the original and genuine heritage of the Yamana!" He felt it necessary to point out emphatically and repeatedly that the words and grammatical construction of the prayer formulas are not current in the language spoken today (24).

24. The opportunity is open to everyone to examine these data, for we have Bridges' dictionary and a number of grammatical studies from the pen of Hestermann. Bridges' translations of the New Testament could also be used for comparison.

Stimulated by this new information, John Lawrence made personal investigations which added to the material. He began by asking general questions about Watauinēiwa of this or that aged Indian, all of whom were friendly and confiding. Later when he discussed with other people the religious ideas and prayer formulas which were now familiar to him, he obtained the same result: "This heritage of ideas is an unadulterated, genuine, and unique possession of the /1084/ Yamana!" The whole discovery gave him sincere and lasting pleasure. He realized how much more favorably these greatly misunderstood Fuegians must be judged if they possess such a beautiful, pure conception of God and practice religion. In the twilight of its existence this much maligned people had the great satisfaction of knowing that now at last European circles will obtain full knowledge of this ancient Watauinēiwa faith. John Lawrence expressed his admiration for the research work and frankly confessed: "Even if I could live here another 50 or 100 years, the natives would not give me the trust that you enjoy among them!"

He viewed his long years of mission work, which had ended earlier, in the light of this unexpected experience. He was honest

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

names meaning "The Powerful One," "The Highest One," and especially by the name of "My Father." He was not the maker or creator, but rather the master and ruler. He was the owner and giver of animals and plant food. It was he who gave life to human beings, and who took it away. He was fundamentally good and benevolent. He lived above in the heavens. He had no body nor had he wife or children. He was distinctly and eminently set off against and above all other spirits, good and bad, and in this sense stood as it were alone. He did not enter into the tribal folklore and mythology. He saw what human beings did, and upon those who broke the precepts of the *Yahgan* socio-moral code, which represented his will, he inflicted punishment in the way of early death, and often the death of their children.

The central role of Watauinéwa in the initiation rites has previously been mentioned. Apart, however, from these rites, Watauinéwa was prayed to a great deal by the individual *Yahgan*. These prayers were mostly petitions to him for food (as the owner of the food animals and plants), for cure and health, and for protection from the elements, as well as expressions of thankfulness. A good many of them were more or less traditionally crystallized formulae, of a few words each, but prayer was likewise expressed in free wording. A quite distinctive feature of *Yahgan* communication with the Supreme Being was the frequency of complaint expressions and charges directed toward him on the occasion of sickness, bad weather, or other evil fortune, and particularly on the occasion of deaths. Gusinde and Koppers collected over 60 of these various kinds of prayer formulae. Some of them are in somewhat archaic language.

In view of these archaisms in the complex, of the many distinctly native features (e. g., master, owner, not creator or maker), of the absence of all characteristically European or Christian conceptions, and of the express and emphatic statements by the natives whose memories or whose knowledge from their elders reached back to premissionary days, there can be no reasonable question but that *Yahgan* theism is aboriginal, and not the result of missionary influence. It seems equally clear that it was central in the religious outlook of the *Yahgan* and that it entered deeply and dynamically in their thoughts, emotional life, and personal behavior.

Shamanism.—A person became a medicine man (yékamush) through an inner call manifested to him in dreams and visions. The héshteka-yékamush, dwarfish spirits, appeared to him; a female spirit, a Haučéllakĭpa, also played an important part in shamanism, as the shaman's helper. Through the dreams and visions the future medicine man learned which of the small spirits was to be his yefáčel, or particular guardian spirit. From this spirit he also received a song.